

Message Text

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44

ACTION CU-03

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 USIA-06 /020 W
----- 115563

R 171046Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS

TO AMEMBASSY ATHENS

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

SECSTATE WASHDC 1705

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PARIS FOR RSC; DEPT FOR CU/ARTS

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SCUL

SUBJECT: BREAD AND PUPPET THEATRE

REF: STATE 034077

1. GROUP PLAYED FOR ONE WEEK AT TUNIS MUNICIPAL THEATRE, THE MOST PRESTIGIOUS HALL IN TOWN UNDER SPONSORSHIP TUNISIAN NATIONAL CULTURAL COMMITTEE. GIANT PUPPETS PARADING IN FRONT OF THEATER GAVE IMPRESSION TO TUNISIANS THAT SHOW WAS FOR KIDS; MOST IN ATTENDANCE BROUGHT SMALL CHILDREN WHO DID NOT UNDERSTAND PRESENTATION AND BEFORE END 2-AND-HALF/HOUR PERFORMANCE CREATED ENOUGH RUCKUS TO DETRACT SERIOUSLY FROM ADULTS' APPRECIATION OF SAME. THIS FIRST SHOW OF KIND IN TUNIS AND IT WAS MYSTIFYING TO SMALL AUDIENCES WHO SAW IT. SHOWS WERE AS OUTLINED REFTEL PARAS. 2 AND 3, NOTHING CUT. ONE REVIEWER TOOK OFFENSE AT THEME OF "CHRISTIAN CIVILIZERS" IN MOSLEM COUNTRY AND TOOK TO TAKS CULTURAL AUTHORITIES FOR LETTING "PROPAGANDA" OF THIS NATURE PASS.

2. LENGTHY REVIEW IN RULING PSD PARTY WEEKLY DIALOGUE CALLED PERFORMANCE TOO INVOLVED. ALTHOUGH REFERRING TO TECHNIQUES AND COSTUMES AS FASCINATING AND ARTISTIC, REVIEW SUMMARIZED THAT PRESENTATION WAS UNEVEN, TOO LONG, CONTAINING A SATURATION OF SIMILAR

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MOVEMENTS, FATIGUING, GRANDIOSE, CERTAINLY NOT FOR CHILDREN AND

DIFFICULT FOR ADULTS.

3. REVIEWER IN INDEPENDENT TUNIS DAILY AS-SABAH CALLED PERFORMANCE "EXCELLENT, OBJECTIVE AND ENTERTAINING," BUT THEN WENT INTO ANTI-VIETNAM WAR ACTIVITIES OF GROUP. GIVEN AS-SABAH'S HISTORY OF ATTACKS ON US OVER VIETNAM AND MIDEAST, PAPER'S REVIEW PROBABLY LESS EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR GOUP'S ART THAN ITS POLITICS.

4. SPONSORS HAD EARLIER APPROACHED TUNIS CAO TO SOLICIT USG ASSISTANCE FOR VISIT. CAO REFUSED, PLEADING POVERTY AND POLICY CONSIDERATIONS.

SEELYE

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